

CLASSIC ART:

AN EXPONENT OF
RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE
ALUMNI SOCIETY OF ALBERT UNIVERSITY,
BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO, CANADA,
June 21st. 1875.

BY
HENRY TAYLOR, LL. D.

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AN EXPONENT

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In obedience to some mysterious law, the mind is stimulated to religious devotion by the contemplation of whatever is beautiful in the realms of the natural or the ideal.

It is the province of Art to reproduce those forms and colors which attract and impress the mind, and, in so doing, it becomes the exponent of religious sentiment. M. Cousin says "the end of Art is the expression of moral beauty by the aid of physical beauty; that moral beauty is the foundation of physical beauty, and this foundation is covered or veiled in nature."

The ancients who worshiped the heavenly bodies were attracted by their beauty; the fire-worshippers saw in the golden flame a beauty which they mistook for the presence of God. The poetic imagery of the Bible, and the pageantry of the Jewish worship, are proof that

beauty is an element of religion. The closing pages of the New Testament represent Heaven as being adorned with objects of surpassing beauty: a city whose walls are garnished with precious stones, having gates of pearls, streets of gold, and waters like crystal. Nature bears testimony to the same purport. The earth may be regarded a great museum filled with pictures and statues; forms of exquisite design and colors of the most pleasing hue.

There exists more of beauty than utility. Beauty attracts the mind with the power of the magnet for the needle—it is a gentle but potent influence which allures us from grovelling thoughts and passions and lifts us up to Him whose wisdom and goodness are reflected in every form of grace and every line of beauty.

To see God in the beautiful is not Pantheism unless the shadow be mistaken for the substance. Beauty is not God; it is only His reflection, and, like Him, it is everywhere. Where can the eye rest, or the mind wander, that beauty may not be found? We see it in the sparkling dewdrop and in the glittering gem; in the emerald leaf and in the crimson rose. We see it in the mountain slope that carves in graceful outline the distant horizon, and in the green drapery that mantles the unpopulated plain. We see it in the lights and shadows that flit across the landscape, and in the fleecy clouds that float in the sky. We see it in the rainbow that spans the bosom of the firmament like the baldric of a god, and in the stars that gleam like diamonds from the chambers of space. Beauty is omnipresent like God; it glitters in the smallest crystal as well as in the mightiest orb—it is a revelation of God.

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Theology makes no damaging admission in conceding that God reveals Himself to us by forms of beauty; that all beauty is a reflection of Him, and that physical beauty is a symbol of moral beauty. But what is this quality which we call beauty which is so eloquent in moral lessons, and to which Art owes its origin as well as its grand results? Philosophy has no solution of the problem. The Greeks, who made the beautiful their chief study, were unable to fix its conditions or formulate its attributes. Socrates contented himself by pointing out such things as produce pleasure rather than pain, while his disciples named woman as its best type, and claimed that upon her nature had bestowed a large proportion of all beauty. Plato was more laconic, but equally vague in defining it, as consisting in "unity and variety." All philosophers have found the same difficulty. Proclus concluded that beauty was not the subject of analysis, for it "swims on the light of forms." Reid was more classic in concluding that beauty is a quality of the circle not demonstrable by process of reasoning. Ruskin quaintly asserts "why some forms and colors are beautiful, is as unknown as why sugar is sweet or wormwood bitter." Emerson concludes that being warned by the ill fate of many philosophers he will not attempt a definition of beauty. Whatever difficulty may be experienced in solving the problem or defining the attributes of this mysterious quality we instantly recognize its existence wherever it reveals itself to our senses, and consciously experience an elevation of our moral natures.

Beauty is a visible symbol of a thought of God. Art, by its multiplied devices, reproduces that thought,

and becomes at once the prophet and exponent of religious sentiment.

Wherever man has been found groping after the spiritual, and yearning for a revelation of the Infinite, Art has also been found in sacerdotal robes officiating at the altars of religion. This was true with the ancient Assyrians, Babylonians and Egyptians, but especially with the Greeks and Romans. Art constructed and decorated their temples, and furnished them with symbols of worship. Hebrew history also furnishes us with a striking example of the tendency in the human mind to avail itself of the aid of Art in religious devotion. That favored people had been visited by angels, and prophets had declared to them the purposes of the Almighty. It would seem that they needed no symbols to strengthen their faith or inspire their devotion; but, in full view of the cloud which enveloped their God and their prophet, in sight and hearing of the lightning and thunder which emanated from that august presence, Art formed in its crucible the golden calf, and sat it up amid the acclamations of the people.

The religion of the Greeks owed its paternity and power in large measure to the creations of Art. Beauty was thought to be the grandest manifestation of Divine thought and wisdom, and as a sequence became the subject of worship.

The Greek philosophers determined that curves and circles were more graceful than angles; that cones and spheres were more pleasing than cubes, and that a blending of these lines with symmetry of parts constituted the very acme of the beautiful. The human form was found to embody all these conditions, and was se-

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In this conclusion the Greeks arrived at the same truth that had been revealed to the Hebrew chronicler that man was made in the image and likeness of his Creator—a conclusion which we regard as the result of æsthetic culture; but may it not have been a revelation to them?

We are inclined to the belief that poets are inspired; that Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Shakspeare's dramas, are more than the inspirations of the Muses: are they not the inspirations of God? May not that illustrious people have enjoyed, in some small measure, that Divine light which impresses rather than overwhelms man in his groping after the unknowable and infinite? What do we hazard in admitting that the worship of the beautiful was the result of a twilight inspiration? or, would it be more orthodox to account for this phenomenon by the accidents of their history? No people were ever more favorably situated for cultivating a taste for the beautiful. They inhabited a group of romantic islands; their skies were cloudless, and their climate sweetened by aromatic breezes. Legend and fable added their charm to every prospect. On the one hand was Olympus, the throne of the gods, and on the other Parnassus, the shrine of the Muses. All nature was clothed with imperial loveliness, and everywhere glittered the beautiful creations of Art and Architecture. Upon all this scene of glory and beauty shone the golden rays of a temperate sun and the silvery light of a cloudless moon.

" There every form of nature's loveliness
 Wakes in the breast a thousand sympathies
 In morn's rich firmament serenely bright,
 Or setting suns the lovely shore suffuse
 With all the purple mellowness of light :
 O who could view the scene so fair,
 Nor dream that joy and peace and liberty were there !"

Such was Greece, the abode of the beautiful—the cradle of the arts.

Without inspiration, Nature was the only volume that spoke of Divinity. She was animate with life, revelling in seductive charms and full of intelligent design. Here was God basking in the sunshine and languishing in the beauties of form and color. The incomprehensible presence was everywhere concealed, yet in everything revealed. In the mirrored lake, in the limpid stream, in the smiling landscape, in the towering mountain, in the fleecy cloud, in the vaulted sky, in the golden orb of day, and in the myriads of eternal eyes that gazed down from the heavens.

It was the province of philosophy to analyze Nature, to extort her secrets and determine her forces ; but it was the prerogative of Art to reproduce her noble forms, which were eagerly seized upon as symbols of worship. These symbols were designed to represent the invisible attributes and operations of the Deity, in the physical as well as the moral government of the universe.

If philosophy and Art became allies in conceiving and evolving the Greek mythology, the result fully justified the compact. They were like light and heat in developing the plant and flower. Under their united influence mythology became a system of ethics, founded upon

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philosophical principles, and embellished by poetic sentiment and imagery. "Beneath all the pagan legends of the gods, and underlying all the elaborate mechanism of mythological worship, there are unquestionably philosophical ideas, theological conceptions, and religious sentiments, which gave a meaning and even a mournful grandeur to the whole."

Art was the vitalizing principle that gave mythology life and influence. Its power was fitly illustrated by the legend of Orpheus charming the trees and wild beasts with the music of his lyre. The idea cloaked under this imagery, says a popular author, is the power of culture that comes through the fine arts influencing men from childhood to old age.

What fountains of wisdom were opened up by the genius of Grecian Art, whose waters have flowed down through the ages as fresh and sparkling as though they had their origin from beneath the throne of God!

The Muses almost exhausted their inspiration with this gifted people. Homer was the father of epic poetry, as Pindar was of the lyric, and Æschylus of the dramatic. They discovered the wondrous potency of music, and by it were dissolved into tenderness and elevated to joy, inspired to love and inflamed with courage. They were also familiar with the magic powers of the painter's brush; but the channel through which Grecian Art especially flowed, and where it achieved its grandest results, was sculpture, the admiration for which filled the popular mind with æsthetic charms and religious enthusiasm.

It is a phenomenon in metaphysics that sentiment becomes contagious: the bent and purpose of one mind

often embues and controls the million. Peter the hermit inflamed all Europe with martial heroism and inaugurated the Crusades. Phidias and Praxiteles inspired the Greeks with a belief that man had the form of a god, and that that form contained all that was beautiful in design. That no vocation was so dignified, or art so noble as that which studied and reproduced the human form. The Greeks became a nation of sculptors. Pliny says Lysippus was the author of fifteen hundred works in sculpture; that there were three thousand statues in Rhodes, as many in Athens, Olympus and Delphi. If four cities contained twelve thousand statues, how many must there have been in all the cities and hamlets of Greece? They filled the temples and market-places—they clustered about the fountains and along the margins of rivers and seas—they stood like armies in the valleys, and were niched in colossal proportions in the mountain sides. Public sentiment tolerated nothing but the highest Art, and, as a consequence, these statues were marvels of beauty and power. To produce such results, especial preparation was required.

The Greeks in their early history were like other nations—stalwart men and lusty women were the exception and not the rule. There were few men like Achilles or Ajax, and fewer women like Ariadne or Diana.

They required models for imitation, for they believed to produce a statue of any merit was to copy a living model. With the Greeks the highest Art was the best imitation of Nature. As truth should precede its symbol, there should first be finely developed men and women, and then statues of brass and marble to represent them. They employed all the aids of physical culture to produce

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the rounded limb and symmetrical form, and, as a consequence, in creating beautiful statues from living models, Greek artists have never been excelled. Hence, the proverb of the centuries, that "any statue, however artistic, may yet receive from Phidias and Praxiteles many touches and finishes."

With the Greeks, the Art of Sculpture was the dominant passion as it was the powerful medium of controlling the mind and heart. It was the great prophet and teacher of their religion. Without it, mythology would have been but a catalogue of mystic names, passionless and powerless.

It was a potent argument to point to the mysterious beauty of form and conclude that such was the handiwork of the gods; it was equally potent to carve those gods in marble, and associate with them their respective attributes and authority.

The Greeks were Polytheists; they had gods many. To each they assigned some special department of Nature involving some human interest, and, as such, they were worshiped. Those who went down to the sea in ships and did business in great waters were pointed to Neptune as the god who held their destinies in his hand. Ceres was worshiped as the goddess of the harvest, and Bacchus as the god of the vintage. Zeus was the god of the skies and sent the rain upon the parched earth.

The whole family of gods were represented by statues produced in the highest order of Art. The wealth of genius expended upon these statues invested them with marvellous attractions; their form and expression compelled a belief in the Divinity that was supposed to

slumber beneath the surface of the marble. A glimpse merely detected beyond the personal form in a sort of half light the physical or moral power of which the figure was only the symbol.

Legend spread her golden canopy over the family of gods, and hung her garland of pearls around the neck of each. The highest flights of their poets and the choicest gems of their literature celebrated the exploits of their gods. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* would contain but few thrilling incidents and but little glowing imagery but for the mythological legend and fable that run like golden threads through those heroic narratives. The whole compass of Greek literature abounds in legend and fable which Art embodied and illustrated, and which at the present time rank among the finest gems in our museums and Art galleries. Among these may be mentioned Venus sweeping through the heavens in her chariot, drawn by doves and heralded by Mercury; or Diana breaking her bow and arrows, and relying upon the charms of her nude person to subdue the ferocity of the wild beasts; or Europa being borne away upon the back of Jupiter, who had assumed the form of a bull, and swam with his precious burthen across the sea to the Isle of Crete; or Alcibiades receiving instruction from Socrates, surrounded by beautiful maidens, whose presence made philosophy tolerable to that wayward youth.

Grecian Art cannot be understood and appreciated without some knowledge of mythology, for the works of Art were merely its symbolism. Stripped of its philosophical significance, mythology was "a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols;" many moral precepts, and much that is mysterious in

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human experience, were explained by it. What can so graphically tell the story of man's origin and destiny as the fable of the old god Chronos devouring his own offspring? the earth is the god and we are the offspring; from the earth we came, and unto it we return. Or what, in the absence of revelation, could better solve the mystery of young persons dying, or of old persons loving, than the fable of Cupid resorting to a cave to escape the scorching rays of the sun; being weary, he cast his quiver upon the rocky floor, laid himself down and fell asleep. The cave was also occupied by the god of death, with whose darts mingled those which had fallen from Cupid's quiver. Upon awakening, Cupid, in his haste, gathered up the darts indiscriminately, and being unable to distinguish between them, sometimes pierces the hearts of the young with the shafts of death instead of the darts of love, and sometimes sends the darts of love to the hearts of the aged instead of the arrows of death. The fable makes accident the only possible explanation of the unseemly occurrences of young persons dying, and of old persons forming new attachments. If there are no laws with inexorable penalties, and no undying love in the human breast, accident alone can afford a solution of the mystery.

What could more impressively portray the power and supremacy of Him—who is "a great God and a great King above all gods"—than the legend of Jupiter telling the assembled gods that although they should fasten a chain to the heavens and drag them downwards with united strength, they would not be able to move him from his seat; nay, that if it so pleased him, by one touch he could draw all things to himself.

One of the most beautiful of the Greek legends is that of Zeus becoming enamored of his daughter Liana, who rejected his suit and fled from his presence. Zeus was the sun, and Liana the moon. When morning opens its golden gates, and the god of day mounts the steep of the sky, the moon fades away amid the splendor of his presence; having made his circuit through the heavens he wraps his mantle of purple and crimson around him and disappears only to renew his pursuit when he shall have returned to the Orient, and thus he has traversed this circle with unwearied constancy from age to age. What a sublime metaphor of the irrepressible and imperishable nature of Divine love. It was these and similar legends embodied in statuary, depicted on canvass, and glowing in song and story, that invested the Greek mythology with its marvellous charms.

It is not surprising that a people like the Greeks, familiar with the wonders and beauties of nature and with the varied traditions of their race, should weave around the germ of instinctive faith a vesture of myth and fable upon which their minds might repose, and from which their hearts might derive some tranquil assurances. It is not surprising that they should hear the faint echoes of an eternity past and beyond, and see in the visible immensity of matter the omnipresence of supernatural power and wisdom. Nor is it surprising that a faith derived entirely from these sources should assume the form of Pantheistic Theism and employ legends and symbols to suggest the idea to the mind: symbols that represent the attributes and operations of an omnipresent Divinity that controls the elements, vitalizes nature, and presides with paternal interest over the destinies of men.

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The reflective mind ponders with melancholy sympathy over the mystic tenets of the Grecian mythology and upon the brilliant achievements of Art in creating the statues of the gods which were the symbols of that religion.

The Grecian mythology owed much to the charm of legend, but more to Art—for the mind is always influenced more by what we see than by what we hear. Legend was but a prosy apostle when compared with statuary, which sent its eloquent shafts of logic to the cultured mind.

The Greeks studied philosophy and worshiped the beautiful; it was easy to make these statues symbolize both. They embodied the beautiful as well as the phenomena of Nature, the productiveness of the earth and the sun as the source of light and heat, and the cause of the chemical changes that are constantly taking place in Nature's great laboratory. Those statues were made to express beauty, or power, or complacency or any other attribute which they were designed to symbolize.

Time has laid his ruthless hand upon these magnificent creations of Art, and yet the fragments that are preserved in the museums of the world are the subjects of wonder and admiration. To the classic scholar, they are worth their weight in gold—for to him they are chapters from the philosophies of the Ancients and symbols of their religion, and are associated with the lore which entranced him in Homer and Hesiod, in Æschylus and Euripides. The visitor to the British museum finds nothing in that vast collection of specimens from Nature and Art that interests him more than the Elgin marbles, which are merely fragments of Hercules, Neptune, and other statues

of the Greek mythology that once adorned the Pantheon and the temple of Minerva. Sir Isaac Newton had never beheld those statues when he ridiculed the Earl of Pembroke for being infatuated with "the stone dolls of Greece;" nor had he, like Bacon, regarded mythology as a system of natural and moral philosophy in which Psyche, Ariadne and Juno were figures of an allegory representing the forces of Nature and the beauty of material objects.

But after all, having admitted the extraordinary merits of the Greek gods, as works of art and the sublime poetry of their legends, the painful thought presents itself to our minds that the gods were merely deified men, and all the symbolism of mythology, whether of Art or Architecture, conformed to that idea. There was nothing lofty or elevating in the system. There was no soaring of thought beyond the visible and tangible; there were no eagle flights of the mind across the eternal gulphs, and no conception of an Infinite God pervading all matter and filling all space. Their highest ideal was Nature, which furnished all their prototypes and suggested all their moral lessons. The gods were believed to have appetites like men, and to subsist upon Ambrosia and Nectar. They had passions and prejudices like men. Their abodes were not in the high altitudes of heaven but upon Mount Parnassus, around which clouds gathered and tempests spent their fury. Their temples were built in conformity with this idea of a limited and earthly divinity. They had no arch suggestive of the bending skies; no dome to symbolize the universe as the abode of a god, and no towering spire to direct the mind to his throne. Their temples expressed but one idea, and that

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was earthly beauty—the beauty of the human form from which was derived the three orders of their architecture representing the man, the matron, and the maid.

A Thomson says in one of his poems:

"First unadorned
 And nobly plain, the *maiden* Deity rose
 The *maid*, then with decent *matron* grace
 Her dry *philosophy*, luxuriant nest
 The rich Cornucopia spread her *rich* wreath."

Whatever views we may entertain of Grecian Art and Mythology, there nevertheless clusters around the name of Greece enough of glory and beauty to charm the imagination and sway the judgment. Greece was the reservoir into which flowed older civilizations; the lights from other altars found their focus in her temples and upon her shrines; Egypt, Assyria and Babylon gave their of ferings of runic religion, and by these flickering lamps she strove to comprehend the mystery of human life and the still greater mystery of Divine existence and government.

Greece, classic Greece—the fountain of poetry, literature and eloquence; the cradle of the Arts; the sanctuary of beauty and light; we admire her although in ruins; we are linked to her by the tendrils of mysterious affection. There lingers still in our ears the music of her harp and lyre. We hurry willingly to catch the silvery tones of her orators, and the sweet songs of her poets, the counsel in the hands of her artists is like the conjuror's wand to entrance us to the spot. We leave her as we leave the embrace of our mother, or the home of our childhood—reluctantly, sorrowfully.

Out of the ruins of Greece was formed, upon the seven hills of the Tiber, another civilization, and the genius of

Art transferred its inspirations from its ancient haunts to the marble temples and gilded palaces of the Eternal City. Art was still the willing vassal of religion and created a long line of marble gods for Rome as she had done for Greece. Here and there were introduced new divinities to characterize the new civilization; but the old gods were retained under new names. The Zeus of the Greeks was the Jupiter of Rome; Ares became Mars, and Aphrodite Venus.

A hundred temples were built and dedicated to their respective gods who swarmed upon the altars and in the niches like bees in the hive. Art lavished its elegance and decorations upon these pagan sanctuaries. The spoils of Greece and Carthage, and the thousand cities that were added to Rome by conquest, increased their grandeur by accumulated works of Art and by the introduction of new designs.

Rome reached her climax of power and art, her zenith, in the Augustan age. Her walls and gates enclosed the beauty and glory of the world. Rude structures had given way to magnificent palaces and grand temples. Augustus accomplished the boast that he had found Rome built of brick, he would leave it built of marble.

Triumphal arches spanned the principal avenues; monuments met the eye in every square. The colosseum lifted its parapets to the clouds, and the Pantheon spread its vast dome over the temple of all the gods. Along the Appian Way were tombs as magnificent as palaces, where rested the dust of the honored dead. Upon these, also, Art had lavished her wealth. To the lamps of beauty and power were added those of sacrifice and memory. Statues of warriors, statesmen, orators and

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scholars in the courts and squares, on pedestals and in niches, were everywhere to be seen. This was Rome in the Augustan æra. The Roman Empire was the world, and Rome was the metropolis. Every road led to Rome, and every ray of light found there its focus. Ambition had reached its highest aspirations, and Art had attained its grandest results.

A prophet might have foretold that a more radiant aureole awaited the brow of the Mistress of the World, when her gods should be dethroned and holier fires lighted upon her altars, when her grand temples should be consecrated to a better service, and when Art the inspired but misguided priestess of religion—should offer a purer and more acceptable sacrifice.

The religious systems of Greece and Rome had required all the aids of allegory, legend and Art to establish and maintain them; they required a thousand symbols to attract the eye and guide the imagination. The new religion had but few symbols, chief among which was the cross—simple in form, and destitute of any of the lines of beauty or embellishments of Art. It was an emblem of sacrifice and a harbinger of peace and joy.

The great Apostle to the Gentiles was sent to Greece to proclaim a gospel for which their benighted minds languished—for the Greeks were not fully satisfied that they worshiped the true God. Their invocations were often addressed to the unknown God. On that memorable day, standing on Mar's Hill, having an audience of philosophers, artists and populace, Paul proclaimed: "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you."

Greece had fallen! She was then a Roman province; her temples were in ruins, and her marble gods had lost their lustre; circumstances favored the introduction of Christianity into Greece, but Rome was in her glory, dominant, haughty, invincible. Paul entered Rome as he had entered Greece, and upon the same errand. If he had been an eminent sculptor, or painter, or poet, he might have expected an honorable reception, but he was neither; nor had he any works of Art or costly gifts to present to the government or the gods. The marvel of the age—the seal of the Christian system is the fact that Rome forsook her gods and embraced the new religion.

Christianity has no more distinctive attribute than simplicity. It is the reality to which the types and ceremonies of the Jewish worship pointed. The ritualism of the temple service was superseded by a religion of mercy and love—such doctrines required no grand temples or artistic symbols. The great teacher proclaimed his gospel beneath the dome of heaven, upon the mountain-top, at the seaside, or in humble dwellings; but a people like the Romans, who were incapable of separating the ethical from the æsthetic, could not abandon their grand temples and beautiful shrines, and worship in the open air or in edifices where no objects of Art ministered to their taste or imagination.

This was a change too radical; the human mind is scarcely capable of such transformation. They abandoned their gods, but re-dedicated their old temples to the new faith. Beneath the dome of the Pantheon, and within the temple of Jupiter, resounded the melody of holy song and the orisons of Christian worshippers

With the lapse of time and the growth of the church, the genius of Art insidiously infused itself into the new religion until it came to be thought that the most impressive teacher was not he who declaimed from the pulpit or ministered at the altar, but that which spoke from dome, and arch, and column, in symbolism of beauty and power. The architecture and furniture of the sanctuary were made to glow with the eloquence of Christian faith and doctrine.

It is true, conversion from Paganism to Christianity did not at once obliterate the images of beauty which tradition and culture had fixed in the minds of the old Romans. They were attached to those old Art subjects by elements that could not be easily sundered; hence, it was, that the early Christian Artists not infrequently employed mythological symbols to illustrate religious subjects. In the tomb of one of the early Christians at Rome, is a painting of Elijah, ascending to heaven in a chariot, with an angel in the form of Mercury at the reins of horses; in another, is Orpheus and the lyre, symbolizing the power of the gospel over benighted minds; another symbol, borrowed from mythology, was the sun and moon, represented by *Sol* and *Luna*, seated in their orbits, and veiled by clouds, with their right hands raised to their cheeks, an ancient sign of sorrow—this painting symbolized the crucifixion; another represented classic deities rising from the tomb and from the waters, teaching the Christian doctrine that, at the Resurrection, the dead and buried shall give up their dead.

The employment of mythological symbols was the exception rather than the rule; in the main, Art conformed to the true spirit of Christian orthodoxy.

The paintings in the Catacombs, of a very early period, comprised a symbolism which has scarcely been excelled by modern artists who were free from the shackles of paganism in which tradition, art and literature, with a triple cord, had fettered the Roman mind.

In the tombs along the Appian Way are vaults and galleries, upon the walls of which the early Christian artists painted such subjects as Daniel in the Lion's Den, and the Hebrew Children in the Fiery Furnace, with angels protecting them in their peril; illustrating the care of God for his chosen ones; and the Saviour raising Lazarus from the grave at the request of his sorrowing sisters—typical of the resurrection from that sleep that knows no waking. In one of those tombs is painted upon the stuccoed walls Moses removing the sandals from his feet before going into the presence of God; and again, that old worthy smiting the rock out of which issued the limpid water, symbolizing a pure heart and life, and the power of faith, when blended with such condition. In another is represented one of the old patriarchs reclining in "green pastures and besides the still waters," while a female with uplifted hands is apparently exulting in joy and ecstasy—these represent the triumphs of the redeemed.

In the early ages the cross and the anchor were the chief symbols of the Christian faith and hope. Then followed the age of representing Christ in statue and upon canvass, and then the age of painting apostles and martyrs, and then followed the era in which Art claimed universal dominion.

There was scarcely an incident in Bible history or Christian literature that was not told with more touching

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It is curious to trace the caution with which statues and paintings of Christ were tolerated by the early Christians. Having just emerged from paganism they abhorred the images of the gods, and besides they were not quite sure of the propriety of representing the Divine Christ in marble or on canvass. Emblems were generally employed in preference. A fish was the earliest and most universal symbol; the Greek name being composed of the initial Latin translation Jesus, Christus, Dei, Filius, Salvator—forming the initial anagram of the title of Jesus.

Another emblem was the lamb, and another the lion—taken from prophecy and the books of the Evangelists. Another striking emblem was the pelican that tears her breast open to feed her young with her blood—typical of man's redemption through the blood of Christ. Eusebius and Tertullian tell us, however, that when the new religion had supplanted Paganism, and its spirit better understood, both statues and paintings of Christ were not only tolerated but commended by his followers. The first representations gave him an emaciated and dejected look; "His visage was marred;" He was "a man of sorrows;" but when Paganism lost its power to persecute, and a brighter day dawned upon the infant church, He was represented with placid and joyous features, possessing comeliness, "and altogether lovely." Eusebius mentions that in his day not only were images and pictures of Christ, of great beauty and majesty, numerous among Christians, but that lovers of Art among the unchristianized Greeks and Romans obtained and valued them as art treasures.

The schism which resulted in establishing the Greek and Roman Churches, and the overthrow of the Roman Empire, were events which proved disastrous to the Christian religion. A long period of declension followed this catastrophe, and then followed the centuries which are properly designated the Dark Ages.

During this period no great tidal wave of reform swept over the nations—no missionary enterprises bore the banners of Zion to remote parts of the earth. It was a period of inactivity and retrogression. Alas! the human race has no fixed social and moral status, as with the restless sea there is always an ebb or a flow; a rolling on of the wave glittering under the golden light of the sun, or a surging back into the gloomy wastes of darkness and night. During the Dark Ages the passions and avarice of men knew no moral restraints. Religion was a myth, and statues and images became objects of worship as they had been under the Pagan mythologies. It was not until the Crusades of the eleventh century that the great heart of Christian Europe gave evidence of spiritual life; but even then the pulsations were abnormal and spasmodic. The vital forces were only stimulated and not permanently elevated. No substantial moral convalescence was effected. Art was enervated by the vital depletion. Although it stood like Hercules with shoulder to the wheel, it was, nevertheless, manacled and hoodwinked, and achieved no grand results.

It was not until the age of Michael Angelo that Art recovered its normal strength as a prophet and teacher of religion. Singular that so long a time should have elapsed without the genius of Art unfolding its golden visions to any great artist, and then that a constellation

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of great masters should at once appear to mark an epoch in the history of the world. But this phenomenon is not confined to Art, it is also common in philosophy and literature.

The same age produced Socrates and Plato, another produced Cicero and Virgil, another Tasso, Bacon and Shakspeare, another Lessing, Goethe and Samuel Johnson. A similar cause evolved Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, Guido and Murillo—all great artists, and all consecrated their genius to religion. Angelo was the greatest star in the group: indeed, he may be regarded the sun around which the others revolved. He combined in his great genius the architect, the painter and the sculptor. It was he who said "an angel sleeps in a block of marble," and by his inspired art he removed the covering and revealed the heavenly form. He was the author of the statue of Moses, he painted *The Last Judgment*, and was the architect of St. Peter's. Harvey said of his three great works, "his Moses inflames, his dome of St. Peter's awes, and his *Last Judgment* startles." Raphael's inspiration was of a different kind: his ideal was less austere and more pathetic; his choice subjects were the Infant Jesus, and the Transfiguration upon the Mount. The Christian world is familiar with those marvellous pictures. His *Madonna and Infant Jesus* is an heirloom in most households, and what a teacher it has been. Who that has looked upon the sweet and sublime face of the Infant God, and gazed into those mysterious, loving eyes, has not felt spiritual influence stirring the fountains of his soul?

Raphael was like John, he loved to recline upon the bosom of his Master.

Guido was like Peter, bold and defiant; he preferred the grand and tragic. His choice subject was the Crucifixion. To get a conception of the Divine tragedy, it is said, he suspended one of his pupils on a cross, and stabbed the helpless victim that he might transfer to canvass the awful expression of final suffering. The marvellous merit of the painting was thought a justification. Heaven had gained a martyr, and earth a glimpse of Divine love.

Titian and Murillo occupied the middle ground; their works illustrated the influence of Divine light and love upon the mind and heart of man; illuminating the dark chambers, melting the icy crystals, and binding with a golden chain his wayward affections to the person and government of the Redeemer. Who can tell how much civilization and religion owe to these wonderful representations, and to these no less wonderful men.

But Art, as an exponent of religious sentiment, has not been confined to painting and statuary; its devices and symbolism have given voice to church architecture. It is scarcely possible to conceive how more theology could be expressed by architecture than is crowded into those grand old cathedrals which were built in Italy and all parts of Europe from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. They are constructed in the form of a cross, symbolizing the atonement; the three entrances are typical of the gathering in of worshipers from all parts of the earth; the buttresses supporting the walls are declarative of strength—"In strength will I establish Mine house." The three towers symbolize the Divine Trinity; the spire, surmounted by the cross, points to heaven, suggestive of that love which lifts us up to the heavenly mansions; the turrets are so many tiny fingers pointing to the same goal.

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The universe is the temple of God; the vaulted sky is its dome; trees and flowers are its decorations. The sun illuminates this great temple, with its golden light revealing its beauty and glory. In imitation of this vast sanctuary, they gave the pillars the appearance of being formed by bundles of reeds; the pointed arch and flowing tracery of doors and windows were copied from the foliage of trees, and the decorations represented flowers. Painted windows let in the mellow light, tinged with gold and crimson, while the swell of music reverberating from pillar to arch, overwhelmed the senses, and filled the soul of the worshiper with holy emotions.

No person can behold those grand old monuments of Christian Art and enterprise without detecting an amplitude of symbolism, and without experiencing an elevation of moral thought and sentiment, "set free from earth and proceeding unfettered to the skies." Among the most noted of these edifices are the cathedrals of Florence and Milan, of Cologne and Strasbourg, St. Peter's at Rome, St. Mark's of Venice, Notre Dame of Paris, and St. Paul's of London—all vast in proportions, radiant with gems of Art, and vocal with religious symbolism, holding up their pinnacles to heaven, and shedding their grandeur upon the earth.

The grandest and most imposing of these temples is St. Peter's at Rome—built in the form of a Greek cross; it is 613 feet long by 446 feet through the transepts. The height of the ceiling in the nave is 152 feet, and the diameter of the dome on the exterior is 195 feet, while the apex of the dome is 405 feet, and the top of the cross 448 feet from the pavement—a height never before reached by any human structure, excepting the great pyramid of

Egypt. It covers nearly five and a half acres of ground ; its marble pillars and arches—the gilded canopy covering the altar ; its painted windows and frescoed walls, and, above all, its vastness, overwhelm the senses. Michael Angelo's magnificent conception of its grandeur may be inferred from his boast, "that he would swing the dome of the Pantheon in the air."

As we enter this colossal temple we are reminded of the words of the poet—

"Enter ; its grandeur overwhelms thee not,
And why ? it is not lessened ; but thy mind
Expanded by the genius of the spot
Has grown colossal ; and can only find
A fit abode, wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality,"

But Art has a wider sphere of operation than to build temples and endow them with religious symbols ; she is a priestess in the great temple of Nature whose dome is the sky, whose frescoes are the clouds, and whose altars are the granite mountains ; she conducts us through the aisles of this temple, and discloses to us its beauties ; she lights the lamps of taste, imagination and desire ; she charms us with music, and makes us delirious with joy, whether she works upon inanimate stone, combines colors upon canvass, directs uncertain and fugitive sounds, or models a figure in action or repose, she addresses with mysterious power the imagination and the soul. In the words of Cousin : "Every work of Art, whatever be its form, small or great, figured, sung, or uttered—every work of Art truly beautiful or sublime, throws the soul into a gentle or severe reverie that elevates it toward the Infinite."

